

Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Council (AIACC)

Monday, October 15, 2018

Alabama Industrial Development Training Center

The AIACC met on Monday, October 15, 2018, at the Alabama Industrial Development Training Center. The meeting was called to order by Chair, Senator Cam Ward. Also in attendance were Council members: Brooke Bowles, Robert Caldwell, Suzanne Dowling, Megan Everett, Erich Grommet, Heather Jones, Melanie Jones, Whitney Meade, Constance Rice Johnson, Justin Schwartz, Chris Stewart, and Karen Willis. The following proxies were in attendance as well: Beverly Churchwell on behalf of Stephanie Azar, Terry Pezent on behalf of Lynn Beshear, Sarah O'Kelley on behalf of Fred Biasini, Sondra Landers on behalf of Nancy Buckner, Sonia Cleckler on behalf of Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw, Laurie Eldridge-Auffant on behalf of Scott Harris, and Susan Goldthwaite on behalf of Eric Mackey. Also in attendance was Anna McConnell, State Autism Coordinator.

The minutes from the July 9, 2018 meeting were approved and adopted.

Chairperson Comments: Senator Ward welcomed new members to the AIACC, Erich Grommet, Constance Rice Johnson, Heather Jones, and Chris Stewart. A presentation acknowledging the work of Paige McKerchar for ABA services and licensure in the state was made by the Autism Society of Alabama.

Membership/Bylaws Committee: Voting results for four participant categories were as follows:

- AIACC Co-Chair: Whitney Meade
- Executive Committee member (adult 19 years of age or older): Robert Caldwell and Karen Willis
- Executive Committee Member (parent of a child with ASD 18 years of age or younger): Tametrica Conner
- Executive Committee member (other participant category): Erich Grommet

Regional Autism Network Update:

Auburn: Doris Hill reported that AU, UA, and USA have partnered together to meet with stakeholders in Selma to assess needs and try to match those needs with resources.

UA: Sylvia Hollins reported that she is learning the needs of the region and started in August. She is pulling together a resource directory and has been partnering with other RAN sites to replicate some

of their work and projects and to collaborate. She has been meeting with the various Children's Policy Councils in her region to connect with local resources.

UAB: Lizzie Griffith reported that their numbers of referrals have increased during the last quarter, doubling the number of direct assistance requests. They have been hearing more from hard to reach areas of their region, indicating that outreach is beginning to see some fruit. Community Education Workshops are ongoing and reaching a diverse population.

UAH: Whitney Meade reported that they have conducted trainings targeting higher education. They have also received a grant from BOEING intended for empowering educators to teach literacy. Taboo Topics conference is upcoming January 24-25.

USA: Amy Mitchell, via email, reported that they are hosting the Autism Matters Conference along with the Autism Society of Alabama in Orange Beach on April 29. She also highlighted the collaboration with the Selma community.

Public Awareness Update: Melanie Jones and Brooke Bowles announced their Autism Friendly Alabama campaign that was funded by the DD Council. The project will support local businesses to become autism friendly, provide training, and ask the businesses, once they have completed training, to commit to hiring one person with ASD. This is a pilot project with 10 anticipated business participants.

Lead Agency Comments: Terry Pezent was introduced as the new Associate Commissioner of Developmental Disabilities with the Alabama Department of Mental Health. She expressed her excitement about the work and opportunities to serve.

Licensing Board and health coverage update: Marc Williams reported that the Alabama Behavior Analyst Licensing Board has 214 BCBA and BCaBA members (13 of which are BCaBAs). The next meeting is January 25. Now that the bulk of the licensures have gone through, the Board is moving to a monthly meeting schedule. There was also discussion regarding Chapter 37 of the Alabama Medicaid Provider Billing Manual that was updated to include ABA Therapy. There were concerns regarding the language in the chapter, but after discussion with Alabama Medicaid, feel that these issues will be addressed soon to allow for greatest access to service and alignment with national practices. Beverly Churchwell from Alabama Medicaid expressed her agreement. She said that October 1 started open enrollment and to date, 8-10 providers have successfully enrolled. Alabama Medicaid is working closely with the Licensing Board and ALABA in preparation for services being available December 31, 2018, although there will be some restrictions due to general Medicaid requirements. CMS approval is still pending. Bama Hanger noted that more employers are adding coverage and businesses are

interested in coverage – the work of many families' advocacy efforts contributed greatly to this progress.

Senator Ward noted that the legislative session begins the second week in March.

Presentation: Martha Wingate, UAB School of Public Health, Findings from the Rapid Needs Assessment and Environmental Scan (see presentation).

Anna McConnell noted the AIACC Committee Interest Survey to participate in the committees that will be addressing the needs identified by the Rapid Needs Assessment. The Strategic Plan will be informed by this work, and a draft of the Plan will be submitted to the AIACC during the January meeting. For the April meeting, the committees will present their final recommendations for the Strategic Plan and a vote will be taken. The proposed committees are:

STRATEGIC PLAN STRUCTURE - COMMITTEES

Standing Committees

- Executive
- Standards of Practice
- Bylaws and Membership
- Funding and Finance

Ad Hoc Committees

- Medicaid Advisory Group
- Public Awareness
- Regional Autism Network Directors

Announcements:

ASA has CARE Binders available for families statewide, with resources and a way to organize documentation, at no cost to families. Sensory Santa opportunities will be available during the holiday season.

Justin Schwartz, AAP-AL, noted that Project ECHO is in its third cycle. He also noted that healthcare was not addressed in the survey. This might be an area of further exploration.

The AAPN Meeting is immediately following the AIACC meeting.

The Alabama Autism Conference will be February 22, 2019. The Planning Committee is looking for an adult individual to participate on the committee. There are about 3-4 meetings per year in Tuscaloosa. Contact Sarah O'Kelley if interested.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Next meeting: Monday, January 28, 2019

Recording Secretary

A. McConnell